

I FISH NY: Sharing the Fun & Facts of Fishing in NYC and on Long Island

Though New York City (NYC) and its surrounding metropolitan areas make up 57 percent of New York's population, only a fraction of natural resource allocations go to this region. To address this problem, New York Sea Grant (NYSG) and the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) partnered to create I FISH NY, an urban recreational fishing program that encourages NYC and Long Island (LI) residents to conserve aquatic resources by learning about and going fishing.

Since 2005, NYSG has employed two full-time Recreational Fisheries Specialists in NYC and on LI to implement and augment the groundwork established by NYSDEC staff. Using these pilot programs as a guide, the NYSDEC hired four new Promotional Biologists in 2007 to extend the program throughout NYS.

I FISH NY — New York City

I FISH NY-NYC continued to build on its successful classroom program, providing lessons and fishing trips to 1200 children throughout all five boroughs.

Tailored programs were expanded to two new client bases beyond school children: neighborhood community centers and hospital patients with limited mobility. The groundwork was laid in 2008 for ongoing collaboration with these groups, with plans in place to provide clinics to additional community centers and sponsor more disabled-specific events in 2009.



*Program Aide Darin Alberry (right) assists a participant at I FISH NY- NYC's People with All Abilities Clinic at Prospect Park in Brooklyn.
Photo: Betsy Ukeritis*

I FISH NY — Long Island

To increase participation of female anglers, I FISH NY-LI worked with Nassau and Suffolk County Girl Scout Councils to develop a fishing badge for girls grades K-12. To earn their patch, girls begin by completing various educational activities, learning about topics such as local fish identification and stewardship practices, and conclude with a fishing trip to a local water body. In 2008, I FISH NY-LI worked with almost 750 girls with close to 260 earning their "I FISH NY" badge.

I FISH NY specialists also standardized the look and content of lesson plans. Projected to be web-accessible in early 2009, all lessons contain background information, vocabulary definitions, additional resources, and accompanying handouts.